

Message

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TO: THE PRESIDENT-ELECT AND SENIOR TRANSITION STAFF

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About This Briefing

Bulletin Intelligence is under contract to the Executive Office of the President, since 2001, to provide the daily *White House News Summary*, and also produces separate custom services for the majority of Cabinet-level departments and agencies (e.g., the *Attorney General's News Briefing*). We provide this Presidential Transition service until the inauguration, after which our existing long-term contracts generally permit incoming administration officials to customize their service to their unique requirements. Many of our daily services include news-media and social-media data analytics. To add team members during the transition, or to learn more about the services, please email [Client Relations](#) or call (703) 483-6114.

Leading the News

Israel Says It Will Provide Trump With Evidence That Obama Behind UN Resolution.

On a day when Israel indicated it would provide President-elect Trump with evidence that President Obama was behind the UN Security Council demanding Israel cease settlement activity, Trump criticized the UN as ineffective despite having great potential. Continuing media coverage of the fallout from the UN abstaining from the resolution focused on the Israeli response.

[The Hill](#) (12/26, Kheel) reports Israeli Ambassador Ron Dermer on Monday indicated that his country will provide Trump with evidence of the claim. The [New York Post](#) (12/26, Halper) quotes Dermer as saying, "What is outrageous is that the United States was actually behind that gang-up. I think it was a very sad day, really a shameful chapter." [NBC Nightly News](#) (12/26, story 3, 1:15, Alexander) showed Dermer saying, "We have proof. I don't believe it. We know it. And we'll share it with the incoming administration through the appropriate channels." Appearing on [Fox News' Special Report](#) (12/26), Dermer said a minister in Israel's government "heard directly" that Vice President Biden persuaded Ukraine to vote for the resolution, while adding that the "evidence we have is much greater than that. It's pretty clear, it's 100 percent."

[The Guardian \(UK\)](#) (12/26, Beaumont) reports Israel "has escalated its already furious war" with the Obama Administration, claiming that it has evidence that Obama was behind the

resolution. CNN (12/25, Schwartz, Liebermann, Masters) reports on its website that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday "launched a scathing attack" on the White House. CNN's Situation Room (12/26) showed Netanyahu telling his cabinet, "From the information that we have, we have no doubt that the Obama Administration initiated [the resolution], stood behind it, coordinated on the wording, and demanded that it be passed."

The Wall Street Journal (12/26, Jones) reports that Netanyahu has shifted to a more hardline position on settlements in a move that could mean he will abandon his support for a two-state solution. The Journal says Netanyahu's stance has changed as a result of conservative lawmakers being emboldened by Trump's election and calling for the annexation of most of the West Bank and end of the two-state plan.

Reuters (12/26, Heller) says an "Israeli official" said Netanyahu has also ordered that cabinet ministers should not travel to or meet with officials of countries that voted in favor of the resolution until Trump takes office. CNN's Situation Room (12/26) reported Israel has recalled its ambassadors from New Zealand and Senegal, the countries "that put the resolution forward," but did not take formal action against the US. The AP (12/26) reports Israel said its ambassador to Ukraine, Eli Belotsercovsky, was summoned by Ukraine's foreign ministry after Israel canceled a visit by Ukrainian Prime Minister Volodymyr Groysman in response to Kiev's vote in favor of the resolution.

The Jerusalem Post (12/27, Wilner) reports that despite "all the sound and fury emanating from Israel" over the US abstention, "the story in American media has played less as a diplomatic crisis and more as a rare, savory public battle between" the current and incoming president. The Post says broadcast news "highlighted the long and fractious history" between Obama and Netanyahu, as well as "the changes likely to come" when Trump takes office. Meanwhile, the Post adds that newspapers "focused more on details of the resolution and on the diplomatic drama that surrounded its passage than did television networks."

Trump Says UN "Just A Club For People To Get Together, Talk And Have a Good Time." ABC World News Tonight (12/26, story 5, 0:20, Bruce) reported Trump "slamm[ed]" the UN on Monday, while the AP (12/26, Salama) says he "questioned [the UN's effectiveness]." Reuters (12/26, Heavey) says Trump tweeted, "The United Nations has such great potential but right now it is just a club for people to get together, talk and have a good time. So sad!"

NBC Nightly News (12/26, story 4, 0:50, Jackson) reported that President-elect Trump tweeted this weekend, "The big loss for Israel in the United Nations will make it much harder to negotiate peace." Fox News' Special Report (12/26) said Trump elaborated with a tweet that reportedly said, "The 44th President is making life hard for the 45th President on purpose."

Israel Announces It Will Approve New Homes In Disputed Areas. The New York Times (12/26, Baker) reports Israel on Monday said "it would move ahead with thousands of new homes in disputed areas and warned nations against further action." Jerusalem's municipal government indicated that it will approve 600 housing units in the mostly Palestinian eastern section of the city in "what a top official called a first installment on 5,600 new homes."

AP Analysis: Friedman Is "Everything Obama Is Not" On Israel. The AP (12/26, Lederman) reports that Trump's nomination of David Friedman as ambassador to Israel has intensified the division among American Jews between those "who want the US to push Israel toward peace and those who believe Obama's approach abandoned" the US ally. The AP says that if Trump "wanted to show he planned to obliterate" Obama's current Israeli policy, "he might have found his man to deliver that message" as Friedman "is everything Obama is not." Friedman, according to the AP, is "a fervent supporter of Israeli settlements, opponent of Palestinian statehood and unrelenting defender of Israel's government."

Bolton, Glick: Resolution Harms US World Standing, Policy. In a Wall Street Journal (12/26) op-ed, former Ambassador John Bolton says Obama's decision to not use the US' veto on the resolution will have significant consequences for American interests. Bolton says the Obama Administration has abandoned the idea that Israel and the Palestinians must solve their dispute by talking to each other. Bolton says the responsibility now falls to Trump to move away from Obama's policies on Israel.

Caroline Glick of the Center for Security Policy in Washington, DC writes in the Jerusalem Post (12/26) that the resolution and its "implications" are "disastrous to the US itself." The Post says that "by leading the gang rape of Israel" at the Security Council, Obama "undermined the rationale for American power." The Post asks, "If US agrees that Israel is committing a crime by respecting the civil and human rights of its citizens to live in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, then how can America claim that it has the right to defend its own rights and interests, when those clash with the views of the vast majority of state members of the UN?"

Rhodes: Kerry To Outline Mideast Peace "Vision." Bloomberg Politics (12/26, Wainer) reports Secretary of State Kerry will "lay out his vision for Israeli-Palestinian peace in the weeks remaining" before Trump's inauguration, according to deputy national security adviser Ben Rhodes. Asked in an interview with Israel's Channel 2 whether the Obama Administration was planning any initiatives during its remaining time, Rhodes "said a Kerry speech was in the works." Said **Rhodes**, "I wouldn't describe it as new initiatives, I think what Secretary Kerry will be doing is he will give a speech in which he lays out a comprehensive vision for how he sees the conflict being resolved." The Wall Street Journal (12/26, Jones) reports Israel fears a speech by Kerry, scheduled for as soon as this week, could lead to further action at the UN. The New York Times (12/26, Baker) likewise says Israeli officials are "worried that Mr. Kerry would use a coming speech or a conference in France to outline an American peace plan that would be hostile to Israel's interests."

Avigdor Lieberman: France-Organized Peace Conference Is "Tribunal Against" Israel. AFP (12/26) reports Israeli Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman on Monday criticized a January 15 Middle East peace conference organized by France and intended to restart Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts. Lieberman told his Yisrael Beitenu party, "This is not a peace conference. It's a tribunal against the state of Israel." Lieberman added, "It's a Dreyfus trial in a modern version, what they're preparing there in Paris for January 15, with one difference. Instead of one Jew being on trial, it will be the entire Jewish people and the state of Israel."

Rabbi Leading National Menorah Lighting Says "Some Of US Are So Sad" Over Resolution. The New York Post (12/26, Halper) reports Rabbi Levi Shemtov, who was leading the National Menorah Lighting outside the White House on Sunday, "ripped into...Obama for allowing" the resolution to pass. Shemtov said, "I know that some of us are so sad at what happened there with regard to Israel." He added, "We must remember that the way to counter any darkness, any disappointment is not with harsh rhetoric, not with anger, but when we create light, the darkness dissipates."

Rabbi: Power's Tenure Has "All But Obliterated" Reputation As Anti-Genocide Activist. In a The Hill (12/26) op-ed, Rabbi Shmuley Boteach says "all that" Ambassador Samantha Power "is missing is a fiddle" after the resolution. Boteach writes that Power "has figuratively fiddled" while Syria "burns" and her time as ambassador to the UN "has all but obliterated her once formidable reputation as an anti-genocide activist." Now, according to Boteach, "she's decided to kick Israel in the teeth on her way out."

Obama Says He Could Have Won Another Election, Trump Says "No Way."

During an interview on David Axelrod's The Axe Files podcast, President Obama said that he could have won another term if such a thing were constitutionally permitted and he'd chosen to run.

President-elect Trump responded on Twitter, and media coverage is casting the exchange as another chapter in the pre-inauguration battle between the President and President-elect.

On ABC World News Tonight (12/26, story 4, 1:05, Llamas), Mary Bruce reported that "it's the current versus the future president." The AP (12/26, Lederman) says Obama "suggested he still holds enough sway over the coalition of voters that elected him twice to get them to vote for him once again." Obama said, "I am confident in this vision because I'm confident that if I had run again and articulated it, I think I could've mobilized a majority of the American people to rally behind it." Politico (12/26, McCaskill) quotes Obama as saying, "I know that in conversations that I've had with people around the country, even some people who disagreed with me, they would say the vision, the direction that you point towards is the right one."

NBC Nightly News (12/26, story 5, 0:20, Jackson) reported Trump is "taking exception" to the President's comments, while the Washington Times (12/26, Morton) says that after Obama "trolled" Trump, the President-elect "trolled right back." The Hill (12/26, Uchill) "Briefing Room" blog reports Trump tweeted, "President Obama said that he thinks he would have won against me. He should say that but I say NO WAY! – jobs leaving, ISIS, OCare, etc."

The Los Angeles Times (12/26, Wilkinson) reports Obama "said the spirit that his candidacy originally inspired, especially among young people, was 'never snuffed out' despite the last eight years of turmoil." Obama said, "The idealism and the dedication stayed with the staff and got us through some really hard times." The Washington Times (12/26, Ernst) reports that Obama "stressed" that Trump's victory does not show that "'hope and change' was a political illusion." Obama said, "What I would argue is, is that the culture actually did shift, that the majority does buy into the notion of a one America that is tolerant and diverse and open and full of energy and dynamism." The Huffington Post (12/26, Alman) reports says Obama "put a lot of faith in the generation of incoming leaders, 20- and 30-year-olds who capture that 'spirit of America' through their words and deeds." Obama said, "It manifests itself in communities all across the country. We see it in this younger generation that is smarter, more tolerant, more innovative, more creative, more entrepreneurial, would not even think about, you know, discriminating against somebody, for example, because of their sexual orientation."

The Washington Post (12/26, Kranish) says Obama's statements were "an implicit criticism of Hillary Clinton's campaign, which he said acted too cautiously out of a mistaken belief that victory was all but certain." Obama said, "If you think you're winning, then you have a tendency, just like in sports, maybe to play it safer." Obama added that Clinton "understandably...looked and said, well, given my opponent and the things he's saying and what he's doing, we should focus on that." The New York Daily News (12/26, Joseph) says Obama "reiterated an argument he's made a handful of times since the election" when he said, "We're not there on the ground communicating not only the dry policy aspects of this, but that we care about these communities, that we're bleeding for these communities." Obama added, "It means caring about local races, state boards or school boards and city councils and state legislative races and not thinking that somehow, just a great set of progressive policies that we present to the New York Times editorial board will win the day."

However, Voice of America (12/26) says Obama also "praised" and "expressed admiration" for Clinton. Obama said Clinton "performed wonderfully under really tough circumstances." TIME (12/26, Berenson) reports that Obama said Clinton was forced to contend with "a double standard." Obama continued, according to the New York Times (12/26, Schmidt), "For whatever reason, there's been a longstanding difficulty in her relationship with the press that meant her flaws were wildly amplified."

According to the Daily Caller (12/26, Bastasch), Obama "thinks the media" is partly to "blame" for rural Americans not supporting Clinton during the election, despite his Administration

helping those communities. Obama noted Agriculture Secretary Vilsack is from Iowa and said “we devoted more attention, more focus, put more resources into rural America than has – has been the case probably for the last two, three decades.” Obama added, “And it paid great dividends, but you just wouldn’t know that, that’s not something that you would see on the nightly news.” The CBS Evening News (12/26, story 5, 0:25, Brennan) reported Obama “rejected the notion that Democrats have abandoned white, middle class voters” and the Hollywood Reporter (12/26, Strause) quotes Obama as saying “the Democratic agenda is better for all working people.” Obama, according to the Reporter, added that the idea that Democrats have abandoned the white working class is “nonsense” and the Affordable Care Act benefits “a huge number” of people who voted for Trump. Obama said, “Education, family leave, community colleges, making it easier for unions to organize, that’s an agenda for working class Americans of all stripes.” However, Obama “admitted” that the Democratic party failed to communicate its policy and that it cares in states such as West Virginia and Kentucky. Obama said, “There’s an emotional connection, and part of what we have to do to rebuild is to be there.”

Boston Globe Analysis: Trump Faces Challenge In Matching Obama On “Cool Points.” The Boston Globe (12/27, Herndon) reports that Obama and Trump “have well-documented differences of policy and temperament, but...another contrast is emerging – on cool points.” As president, says the Globe, Obama “carefully crafted his image as America’s hippest dad-in-Chief, publishing workout playlists and annual NCAA tournament brackets, rubbing elbows with celebrities, and trading jabs with sports superstars.” However, Trump’s “pop culture star quality is of a very different sort.” For “example: At the 2013 inauguration ceremony for Obama, the national anthem was sung by Beyoncé Knowles, goddess of the pop music universe and paragon of superstardom.” Meanwhile, Trump’s “incoming administration has tapped 16-year-old Jackie Evancho, a relative unknown...to sing at the inauguration. So expect Trump to develop his own version of cool, with his own audience – one with little in common to the past eight years.”

Obama: Staff “Never Got Cynical.” The New York Post (12/26, Halper) reports Obama indicated during the podcast that “he’s been inspired by the ‘heart’ and ‘idealism’ of his staff,” to the point that he cried during a sendoff dinner. Obama said that at a recent senior staff dinner, “I got through about four minutes of the thing and started getting the hanky out.” Obama added, “Overall, this place never got cynical,” continuing, “We never had that fire snuffed out. That is a point of pride for me.”

Clinton Thanks Supporters In Email. Politico (12/26, McCaskill) reports Hillary Clinton sent an “end-of-year email” to supporters. Clinton said, “I want to thank you again for your support of our campaign,” adding, “While we didn’t achieve the outcome we sought, I’m proud of the vision and values we fought for and the nearly 66 million people who voted for them.” Clinton continued, “I believe it is our responsibility to keep doing our part to build a better, stronger, and fairer future for our country and the world.” The New York Post (12/26, Fredericks) says Clinton “took the high road” by “resisting the urge to bash Donald Trump.”

Grossman: Obama “Was The Enabler” Of Trump’s “Success.” In his Chicago Tribune (12/26) column, Ron Grossman says Trump’s supporters “owe” Obama “a final salute” as the President “was the enabler of their candidate’s success.” Grossman says that if Obama “was a run-of-the-mill politician,” it is likely that the GOP would have “chosen a more conventional candidate.” However, Grossman says Obama “wasn’t an ordinary president” and “smashed the mold,” before Trump “stepped nimbly over the pieces.”

Tapper: Clinton’s “Deplorables” Comment Shows “Divide Between” Media, Voters. Breitbart (12/26, Key) reported that on Monday’s edition of CNN’s Wolf, guest host Jake Tapper said during a discussion on Hillary Clinton’s previous comment that President-elect Trump’s supporters belong in a “basket of deplorables” that he does not believe “there’s any story that demonstrates

the divide between the people who report on politicians and the voters, than that story." Breitbart included a transcript which shows Tapper adding, "Because a lot of us, our reaction was, okay, she got the number but a lot of them are deplorable, a lot of them are racist. ... And a lot of voters out there were like, 'You are , you're talking about my husband. talking about my brother. You're talking about where I might vote.'"

Transition Personnel News

Miller Not Joining Administration Amid Hints Of Sex Scandal.

On ABC World News Tonight (12/26, story 7, 0:20, Llamas), Mary Bruce provided continuing coverage of "a little staffing drama" as Jason Miller announced "he won't be joining" the Trump Administration "after all." Bruce said, "Miller says his family needs to be his top priority."

Page Six (12/26, Smith), however, says "insiders had already been buzzing about married Miller 'spending time' during the campaign with Trump adviser A.J. Delgado" and the pair reportedly "went to a strip club with the media after the final debate in Vegas." According to Page Six, Miller's appointment "initially sent Delgado into a Twitter frenzy" and she wrote on Twitter, "Congratulations to the baby-daddy on being named WH Comms Director!" Page Six says Miller and his wife are expecting a second child. Delgado also wrote that Miller was "the 2016 version of John Edwards." Delgado continued, "When people need to resign graciously and refuse to, its a bit... spooky."

WSJournal A1: Expensive Confirmation Process Ahead For Wealthy Appointees.

On its front page, the Wall Street Journal (12/26, A1, Ballhaus) reports that the financial holdings of the five billionaires and six multimillionaires President-elect Trump has appointed to serve in his administration mean they will face a difficult and expensive confirmation process during which they will have to disclose their holdings and divest themselves from any assets that could represent a conflict of interest in their official positions.

NYTimes Analysis: "Sharp" Divide Among Doctors Over Price Nomination.

The New York Times (12/26, Pear) reports there is a "sharp" divide among "caregivers, especially doctors," about HHS Secretary nominee Rep. Tom Price. The Times says the American Medical Association "swiftly endorsed the selection of one of its own" as Price is "an orthopedic surgeon who has championed the role of physicians throughout his legislative career." However, the Times adds, "the larger world of doctors and nurses weighed in" and "the split" became apparent. A petition signed by 5,000 doctors, according to the Times, said the AMA "does not speak for us." The Times adds that "the concerns voiced by dissident doctors do not appear to imperil" Price's chances at Senate confirmation, "but they do ensure" a "contentious" hearing process that "featur[es] a full public examination of the new president's proposed health policies."

WSJournal: Sessions' Views On Civil Forfeiture Should Be Examined.

In an editorial, the Wall Street Journal (12/26) argues that while much of Democrats' criticism of Attorney General-designate Jeff Sessions is wrong, his view on the government's use of civil forfeiture warrant exploration. The Journal decries the practice, which Sessions has defended in the past, and says it would like to hear his views on it today.

Taxes and Budget

NYTimes Analysis: Trump's Corporate Tax Holiday May Not Create Jobs.

An analysis in the New York Times (12/26, Picker) "DealBook" column reports that President-elect Trump has called for a "tax holiday" to enable American companies to bring back profits made overseas at a lower rate, on the belief that the "influx of cash will create jobs." However, advisers to the nation's top executives say corporate boards and executives "are likely to use much of the estimated \$2 trillion held overseas to acquire businesses in the United States, to buy back their own stock or to pay down debt." If companies' "priority turns out to be deals, that would be good news for investment bankers who generate fees from large advisory assignments," but workers "might get laid off as a result of cost cuts derived from combining two companies."

Rampell Predicts Trump Reaction When Economy Goes Bad. In her Washington Post (12/26) column, Catherine Rampell writes that Trump will take office "with among the most favorable economic conditions...imaginable." and "he, and his supporters, will gleefully claim credit. Until things go south, anyway." Rampell details the current "rose-colored economic data," saying "these are some brisk tail winds on which to sail into the Oval Office." However, there is "likely only one direction the economy can head in the medium term: down." Rampell predicts that when that occurs the Trump Administration "will start searching for scapegoats other than Trump's own party and its choices," and adds that "assuming Trump will have already signed a major fiscal stimulus package during an expansion, there won't be much powder left in the keg when Keynesian stimulus is actually needed." Rampell adds that "the numbers will become suspect once again, and Trump may even try to mess with the official government numbers to suit his narrative."

Healthcare

AP Analysis: Republicans Divided Over ACA Replacement.

The AP (12/26, Alonso-Zaldivar) reports in an analysis that while Republicans "are united on repealing" the ACA, they are divided over replacing the law and uniting the various factions will be difficult. While some would "revise and rebrand" the law, scrapping "unpopular provisions" and keeping "well-liked parts," others would eliminate the law entirely and not replace it. The challenge for President-elect Trump and Republican leaders in Congress will be uniting "the groups on complicated changes affecting the financial and physical well-being of millions of people."

Sperling Urges Democrats To Guard Against GOP Efforts To Cut Medicaid.

In an op-ed for the New York Times (12/25), former director of the White House National Economic Council Gene Sperling outlines what Democrats must do to push back against the GOP's plan to privatize Medicare, warning that they must not focus too much on this battle lest they "inadvertently assist the quieter war on Medicaid." Sperling argues that Republicans' efforts to take apart Medicaid is more certain, suggesting neither President-elect Trump nor Senate Republicans "may have the stomach to fully own the political risks of Medicare privatization." Sperling says that without intense focus by progressive Democrats on the broad benefits of Medicaid and its efficiency, Trump will too easily be able "to market the false notion that Medicaid is a bloated, wasteful program."

WSJournal Praises Development Of Ebola Vaccine.

A Wall Street Journal (12/26) editorial praises last week's announcement that researchers have developed a 100 percent effective Ebola vaccine. The Journal argues that while promising vaccines had been under investigation for years, regulatory delays erected by the public health bureaucracy delayed their progress.

Immigration

Schools Assure Immigrant Communities Amid Fears Of Deportations Under Trump.

The Washington Post (12/26, George) reports that across the country, school districts "are trying to help assure immigrant communities ahead of President-elect Donald Trump taking office in January" amid fears that he "will ramp up deportation efforts, already significant during the Obama administration." Educators are stressing that "immigration status is not an issue" and many districts "have reaffirmed that all children in the United States have a right to a public education."

Other National News

HUD Secretary Castro: Trump "The Shadiest, Most Corrupt" President-Elect Ever.

On Monday evening, HUD Secretary Castro said via Twitter, "[President-elect] Trump is so corrupt that if Democrats controlled even one chamber of Congress, he'd be done before he even got started. #2018." Castro followed that up with another tweet: "So Trump – the shadiest, most corrupt guy to take the Oval Office, will have no strong federal checks and balances. Has to change. #2018." Under the headline "Obama Official: Trump 'So Corrupt' He's Lucky GOP Controls Congress," the Washington Examiner (12/26, Chaitin) reports that Castro, "a rising Hispanic politician in the Democratic Party, was once rumored to be in consideration to be Hillary Clinton's running mate."

Trump: "There Was No Hope" Before His Election.

The Washington Times (12/26, Morton) reports that even before he moves into the White House, President-elect Trump is "claiming to be spreading sunshine and happiness. Not to mention boosting the economy. And continuing his Twitter disses of President Obama." Trump took to Twitter Monday afternoon and "took credit for healing the nation's spirit," tweeting, "The world was gloomy before I won – there was no hope."

Holiday Shopping Sales Expected To Be Up Four Percent From Last Year. Jericka Duncan reported on the CBS Evening News 📺 (12/26, story 3, 2:00, Brennan) the post-Christmas season presents "one more chance for retailers to cash in. Analysts predict the week after Christmas will account for about 14 percent of this year's holiday sales." Holiday shopping sales overall "are expected to be up roughly four percent from last year, and online sales have brought in more than 79 billion dollars, that's a nearly 11 percent increase." On NBC Nightly News 📺 (12/26, story 10, 2:50, Alexander), Morgan Radford described a "record-breaking holiday season," with "an estimated \$1 trillion spent on gifts." ABC World News Tonight 📺 (12/26, Story 12, 1:20, Llamas) also reported on post-Christmas shopping.

Polls Find Americans Optimistic About 2017. The AP (12/26, Swanson, Dobnik) reports that an Associated Press-Times Square Alliance poll found that a majority of Americans believe "things are going to get better for the country next year." According to the poll, 18 percent "said things for the country got better" in 2016, while "33 percent said things got worse, and 47 percent said it was unchanged from 2015." Fifty-five percent "believe things will be better for them in the coming year than in the year that just concluded," marking "a 12-point improvement from last year's poll." The Hill (12/26, Kheel) reports in its "Briefing Room" blog that while "Democrats were more likely than Republicans to say 2016 was worse for the country than 2015," Republicans were "more likely than Democrats to feel that 2017 will be even better for them personally."

The Washington Times (12/26, Harper) cites the AP poll and others to claim that "the nation is feeling pretty good about 2017." Rasmussen Reports said that "based on their own recent polls: 'Sixty-one percent believe American society is fair and decent, the highest level of confidence in

three-and-a-half years. Americans also are more optimistic about the future than they have been in over four years.” In addition, a “CNBC economic survey covering the fourth quarter of the year found that 42 percent of Americans believe the economy will get better in the next year, an ‘unprecedented jump’ of 17 points following the election, and the highest level since President Obama won the White House in 2008.”

Doubts Growing About Whether Trump Can Pass Infrastructure Plan In First 100 Days.

The Hill (12/26, Jagoda) reports that there are growing doubts about whether President-elect Trump will be able to pass “a massive infrastructure package in his first 100 days, as he had once promised.” Trump is likely to face conservative pushback over an infrastructure plan and he will “have to weigh many other competing priorities.” Cato Institute economist Chris Edwards predicted that tax reform, the ACA, and appropriations “are going to push infrastructure right out of the way.” Moreover, Trump’s selection of Rep. Mick Mulvaney to be Budget Director has “raised eyebrows” as he is “an advocate for cutting spending, and would appear to be a potential voice within the administration arguing against heavy infrastructure spending.”

Financial Deregulation Could Come With Requirement That Banks Maintain More Capital.

The Wall Street Journal (12/26, Creighton, Tracy) reports that while bank stocks have climbed since the election in anticipation of President-elect Trump rolling back financial rules, that deregulation could result in stricter limits on borrowing as some influential people around Trump believe banks should, in exchange for the elimination of some regulations, maintain more capital.

WSJournal Blasts DOJ’s Pursuit Of Foreign Banks. A Wall Street Journal (12/26) editorial blasts the Justice Department for pursuing foreign banks for allegedly defrauding investors in their mortgage-backed securities in the years before the financial crisis. The Journal says the government is unlikely to prove any of the cases in court and praises Barclays for refusing to settle.

Despite Trump Vow, Obama Administration Moving Forward With Auto Regulations.

The Detroit News (12/26, Laing) reports that as President Obama prepares to leave office, his “administration is barreling ahead with a number of regulations that affect automakers,” even though President-elect Trump has vowed “to drastically reduce the burden of federal rules on US businesses. Jeff Davis, senior fellow for the independent Eno Center for Transportation think tank, said transportation officials in the Obama administration may be trying to ‘flood the zone’ to make it difficult for Trump to repeal its proposed rules after he takes office.” Davis told the News, “Getting rid of these rules isn’t something Trump can do with the stroke of a pen on Jan. 20,” adding, “A lot of these rules can be with us for a long time, even if the administration is actively opposed to them from Day One.” As one example of the Administration’s moves, the News says that the EPA “is trying to finalize gas mileage rules before Obama leaves office in January.”

“Experts” Say Prices, Not Deregulation, Key To Success Of West’s Oil, Gas Industry.

Under the headline “How Much Will Really Change For The West’s Oil And Gas Industry Under Trump?” the Los Angeles Times (12/26, Yardley) reports that Trump’s win in the presidential race “has thrilled many people across the West’s oil and gas industry who say his promises to roll back regulations will free it from unfair and unnecessary obstacles imposed by President Obama.” The Times adds, “Even as some in the oil and gas industry are optimistic – and as conservation groups gird for protests and court fights to protect public lands – experts say blaming government, or giving it too much credit, for restricting oil and gas is mostly missing the point. If another Western

energy boom is around the corner, they say, it will be because prices rise, not because regulations decline.”

WPost A1: Indiana Voucher Program Offers “Glimpse” Of Trump’s Education Policy.

On its front page, the Washington Post (12/26, A1, Brown, McLaren) reports, “Indiana lawmakers originally promoted the state’s school voucher program as a way to” provide “children from poor and lower-middle-class families an escape from public schools that failed to meet their needs. But five years after the program was established, more than half of the state’s voucher recipients have never attended Indiana public schools, meaning that taxpayers are now covering private and religious school tuition for children whose parents had previously footed that bill. Many vouchers also are going to wealthier families, those earning up to \$90,000 for a household of four. The voucher program” offers “an early glimpse of what education policy could look like in Donald Trump’s presidency,” as the President-elect “has signaled that he intends to pour billions of federal dollars into efforts to expand vouchers and charter schools nationwide.”

Seib: Trump’s Agenda May Hinge On 10 Red-State Democratic Senators.

In his Wall Street Journal (12/26) column, Gerald Seib says that when President-elect Trump takes office, the success of his agenda may hinge on 10 Democratic senators facing reelection in 2018 in states Trump won in the Nov. 8 election. Seib says that with their eyes on winning another term, those Democratic lawmakers will face pressure to back Trump’s agenda. Seib points out that five of those Democratic senators – Indiana’s Joe Donnelly, Missouri’s Claire McCaskill, Montana’s Jon Tester, North Dakota’s Heidi Heitkamp, and West Virginia’s Joe Manchin – represent states that Trump won by wide margins.

Pro-Trump Group’s Ad Campaign Presses Red-State Democrats. On its website, KWMU-FM St. Louis (12/22, Mannies) reported that in the wake of Trump’s election triumph, “some of his allied groups are” taking aim at McCaskill.” KWMU-FM added, A new TV ad” aired “on cable stations in the St. Louis and Kansas City markets this [past] week that [sought] to pressure McCaskill to support Trump’s agenda, notably his calls for tax cuts and his promise to repeal the health-insurance program known as Obamacare.” The spot, which also presses McCaskill to support Trump’s cabinet picks, “was produced by an outside group called the Right Way Initiative.” The group is “spending \$100,000 in the St. Louis and Kansas City areas to air the ad, along with mailers and a web site.” It’s “spending as much, or more, on similar ad campaigns...Pennsylvania, Indiana, Montana and West Virginia. All four also have Democratic senators who’ll be on the 2018 ballot.”

Trump Taps Miller To Begin Drafting Inaugural Address.

The New York Post (12/26, Halper) reports that President-elect Trump has tapped Stephen Miller, “one of his closest aides,” to “begin drafting his inaugural address.” Miller, a former aide to Sen. Jeff Sessions, “traveled extensively throughout the presidential campaign — even serving as Trump’s warmup act in several rallies,” and “effectively served as Trump’s chief speechwriter throughout the campaign, authoring some of the most pivotal speeches of the cycle.”

New York AG Says Trump Foundation Cannot Dissolve Until His Investigation Is Complete.

The CBS Evening News 📺 (12/26, story 4, 1:55, Brennan) reported that while President-elect Trump has said he will shut down his charitable foundation “to avoid any conflicts of interest,” that “may be easier said than done.” CBS (Goldman) added that New York’s attorney general is “conducting an investigation and says Mr. Trump’s charity cannot legally dissolve until the

investigation is complete.” ABC World News Tonight (12/26, story 6, 0:40, Bruce) called the Attorney General’s comment a “major snag” in Trump’s plan to shut down the foundation.

USA Today (12/26) says in an editorial that Trump “has a mess on his hands in trying to maintain a business empire while also serving as president.” While he has “taken some baby steps toward disentangling his business and political interests,” he would “put the conflict-of-interest questions to rest by divesting his holdings and putting the proceeds in a blind trust.” USA Today argues that Trump should not “simply turn the business over to his sons, Donald Jr. and Eric, and other executives,” because having his children run the business “accomplishes nothing in shielding Trump from conflicts of interest.”

In an accompanying op-ed in USA Today (12/26), David B. Rivkin Jr. and Lee A. Casey, who served in the Justice Department and the White House counsel’s office during the Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush administrations, argue that Trump “is perfectly entitled to retain his business holdings, and to permit his adult children to run those businesses, as a means of avoiding conflicts-of-interest during his presidency.” They write that allowing his children “to take over day-to-day management of the Trump businesses is a reasonable means of addressing potential and actual conflicts of interest that may arise.”

Republican AGs Eager To Help Trump Roll Back Obama’s Climate Agenda.

The Washington Times (12/26, Wolfgang) reports that under President-elect Trump, Republican attorneys general, “who have spent the past eight years battling the Obama administration’s climate change agenda will have a new role: supporting the Republican president’s complex legal effort to roll back that agenda.” Twenty-four attorneys general signed an open letter earlier this month “laying out how the Trump administration could begin to dismantle President Obama’s global warming agenda.” Focuses on the EPA’s Clean Power Plan, the letter states, “The incoming administration and Congress now have the opportunity to withdraw this unlawful rule and prevent adoption of a similar rule in the future. ... An executive order on Day One is critical. The order should explain that it is the administration’s view that the rule is unlawful and that EPA lacks authority to enforce it. The executive order is necessary to send an immediate and strong message to states and regulated entities that the administration will not enforce the rule.”

California Set To Fight Trump Roll-Back. Meanwhile, California, which “has for 50 years been a leader in environmental advocacy,” is “about to step unto the breach,” the New York Times (12/26, Nagourney, Fountain) reports. In what the Times calls “a show of defiance,” Gov. Jerry Brown and legislative leaders “said they would work directly with other nations and states to defend and strengthen what were already far and away the most aggressive policies to fight climate change in the nation.” Brown said in an interview, “California can make a significant contribution to advancing the cause of dealing with climate change, irrespective of what goes on in Washington. ... I wouldn’t underestimate California’s resolve if everything moves in this extreme climate denial direction. Yes, we will take action.” The Times adds, however, that the effort “poses decided risks for this state” as Trump and congressional Republicans “have the power to undercut California’s climate policies.” Nonetheless, Democrats “relish the prospect of challenging Mr. Trump on climate change.”

Private Lenders Hope Student Loan Market Will Be More Welcoming Under Trump.

The Wall Street Journal (12/26, Andriotis) reports that investors are anticipating that the student loan market will be more welcoming to private lenders during the Trump Administration than during the Obama Administration when lenders like JP Morgan Chase & Co. and US Bancorp were essentially excluded and origination of federally backed student loans was transferred to the government.

WTimes Analysis: Trump To Land In Middle Of Hill Battle Over Fate Of Export-Import Bank.

The Washington Times (12/26, Howell) reports that President-elect Trump will find himself in the middle of "a congressional civil war over the fate of the Export-Import Bank, caught between Democrats and Republican centrists who say the headstrong mogul can use the government-chartered lender to put 'America first' and conservatives who say it is time for the agency to fade into oblivion." The elections "left two of the bank's opponents," House Speaker Ryan and Senate Majority Leader McConnell "in charge of Congress, and Mr. Trump dismissed the bank on the campaign trail as 'featherbedding' for politicians and huge companies that don't need the help."

Falwell Says Trump's List Of Supreme Court Picks Helped Him Among Evangelical Voters.

The Washington Times (12/26, Richardson) reports that Liberty University president Jerry Falwell Jr. told "Fox News Sunday" that President-elect Trump, who outperformed both Mitt Romney and President George W. Bush among white evangelicals, "made an enormous impact with the faith community in May by taking the unusual step of releasing his prospective US Supreme Court nominees ahead of the election." Falwell said, "He made it very clear who his Supreme Court picks would be if he was elected. ... I think that was a big factor." Falwell continued, "He told us what Supreme Court justices he would appoint. That's about all a president can do on the abortion issue is to appoint the right justices."

Muslim Community In Murfreesboro Feels "Unease" Following Trump's Election.

The Washington Post (12/26, A1, Hauslohner) reports on its front page that with the election of President-elect Trump and his choice of Michael Flynn, "who believes Islam is an existential threat to America," as national security adviser, "a deep unease has...seeped into the daily life of many Muslims" in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, where "a right-wing effort to ban Islamic law found one of its first sponsors." a congressman co-sponsored a plan to "defund Muslim 'refugees,'" and "local residents sued to block construction of the only mosque, a fight that ended at the Supreme Court."

Imams Permit Women To Remove Hijabs Amid Fears Of Intimidation. Religion News Service (12/26, Shimron) reports that amid an increase in assaults and acts of intimidation against Muslims, some imams are giving permission for Muslim women to remove their hijabs, at least temporarily. While such incidents "had been steadily rising well before the election," they "became more common during the divisive campaign of President-elect Donald Trump." According to a Pew Research Center analysis of hate crimes statistics from the FBI, "the number of physical assaults against Muslims reached 9/11-era levels last year," and "the number of anti-Muslim intimidation crimes — defined as threatening bodily harm — also rose."

ABC News Highlights Impact Of "Hate Crime Hoaxes" On Muslims. Breitbart (12/26, Binder) reports that in the wake of "a wave of hate crime hoaxes generally reported to make President-Elect Donald Trump supporters look deplorable," and ABC News report highlights "the hardships of the fake claims on Muslims." According to Breitbart, the piece "states that hate hoaxes by Muslim-Americans 'discredit' Muslims altogether." It "focuses predominantly on the impact of hoax hate crimes on Muslims, rather than Trump supporters who are primarily blamed for the fake attacks."

Calls To Remove Paladino From School Board Grow After Comments About Obama.

The Washington Post (12/26, Strauss) reports that there are calls for Carl Paladino, the co-chairman of President-elect Trump's campaign in New York, to be forced off the Buffalo Board of Education "because of vile remarks he made about" President Obama and the First Lady. Asked by the alternative newspaper Artvoice about his biggest wish for 2017, Paladino "said he hoped

'Obama catches mad cow disease after being caught having relations' with a cow, then dies and is buried in a cow pasture." In addition, he "said he hopes Michelle Obama would 'return to being a male and let loose in the outback of Zimbabwe where she lives comfortably in a cave with Maxie, the gorilla.'" Jessica Ditto a spokeswoman for Trump's transition team, said, "Carl's comments are absolutely reprehensible, and they serve no place in our public discourse." However, the transition did not "say whether it was disassociating itself from Paladino."

Obama, First Lady Visit Marines At Base In Oahu.

NBC Nightly News (12/26, story 6, 0:15, Alexander) reported that the President First Lady "carried out a Christmas tradition one last time," taking "time out during their vacation to visit troops at a Marine base on Oahu. Mr. Obama telling them it was the privilege of his life to serve as their commander-in-chief." The AP (12/26) provides a running update of President Obama's activities while he is vacationing in Hawaii.

Despite Pledge Not To Use Signing Statements, Obama Has Issued More Than 20.

The Washington Times (12/26, Dinan) reports that while President Obama "promised during the 2008 campaign not to engage in issuing signing statements," casting them as "a dark spot on the presidency of George W. Bush," he "has become a regular practitioner, issuing more than 20 signing statements purporting to alter the way Congress wrote laws." While the White House and OMB "did not respond to repeated requests for comment on the signing statements, but administration critics said they constituted evidence of hypocrisy."

Obama Says He Was "Wildly Pretentious" In College.

The Hill (12/26, Firozi) reports in its "Briefing Room" blog that during an interview for former adviser David Axelrod's CNN podcast "The Axe Files," President Obama said he was "wildly pretentious" during his college years. Obama likened "his own maturation and development through his school years to his daughters, crediting the 'the kind of discipline that I see in my daughters' to his and Michelle's parenting." According to Obama, his "'gradual' transformation began when he was at Occidental College at the beginning of his undergraduate education." Said Obama, "I became more socially conscious at Occidental even though I was partying, anti-Apartheid movement, starting to be interested in social policy and poverty and starting to study civil rights even if through the haze of a hangover."

AP Analysis: Paperless Voting Machines "One Of Most Glaring Dangers" To Election System.

The AP (12/26, Rubinkam, Bajak) reports that paperless voting machines "present one of the most glaring dangers to the security of the rickety, underfunded US election system." The AP says that while "many" electronic voting machines "are vulnerable to hacking," the paperless digital machines "open the door to potential election rigging that might not ever be detected." The AP adds that the machines' "prevalence magnifies other risks in the election system, such as the possibility that hackers might compromise the computers that tally votes, by making failures or attacks harder to catch."

Oklahoma Newspaper That Endorsed Clinton Still Facing Blowback.

The New York Times (12/26, Fernandez) reports that the Enid News & Eagle, an Oklahoma newspaper, has faced blowback ever since endorsing Hillary Clinton over Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential race. The Times said that the News & Eagle is located "in a red county in what is arguably the reddest of states," and its backing of Clinton "was the first Democratic endorsement

for president in the modern history of the newspaper, which was founded in 1893." The Times adds that "Enid was stunned, and [the] slow-paced agricultural town of 52,000 near the Kansas state line has not been the same since." The newspaper, "with a circulation of 10,000, lost 162 subscribers who canceled" their subscriptions, and "[e]leven advertisers pulled their ads, including a funeral home that had a sizable account."

NYTimes Examines Plight Of Governors Facing Veto-Proof Legislatures.

The New York Times (12/26, Gabriel) reports that North Carolina's GOP-controlled General Assembly this month "welcomed" Gov.-elect Roy Cooper (D) "to an elite but hardly desirable club: the handful of governors around the nation who face veto-proof majorities of the opposing party. First, the state legislature stripped away some significant powers from" the Democrat, and later "backed away from a compromise Mr. Cooper thought he had brokered to repeal the state's notorious 'bathroom bill' limiting protections of gay rights." Even so, says the Times, Cooper "has other options for advancing his priorities, if the experiences of fellow members of his new club, both Democrats and Republicans in other states, are a guide." The Times adds, "Governors outgunned by veto-proof majorities in their legislatures have successfully used the bully pulpit of their office, going over the heads of part-time lawmakers to directly appeal to citizens," and "they can pull the levers of executive action to advance an agenda."

Chicago Sun-Times Analysis: Emanuel Made "A Political Comeback" In 2016.

The Chicago Sun-Times (12/26, Spielman) reports that if it's "possible for a mayor to make a political comeback in a year when the public schools remain broke and the number of murders and shootings in Chicago reach levels not seen since the 1990s," then "Rahm Emanuel did that in 2016. Left for dead politically after his handling of the Laquan McDonald shooting video, Emanuel waged a frenzied, yearlong campaign to rebuild shattered public trust and win back the support he had hemorrhaged. He appears to have succeeded, to the point that the conversation has shifted to whether Emanuel will decide to seek a third term instead of whether he will resign."

High Court To Decide Whether To Hear Case On Fees Collected From Arrestees.

The New York Times (12/26, Liptak) reports that the Supreme Court will soon consider whether to hear the case of Corey Statham, who was arrested in Ramsey County, Minnesota on a charge of disorderly conduct with "\$46 in his pockets." While he was released and the charges were dismissed, "the county kept \$25 of Mr. Statham's money as a 'booking fee'" and "returned the remaining \$21 on a debit card subject to an array of fees." The policy is "part of a national trend to extract fees and fines from people who find themselves enmeshed in the criminal justice system," and an "unusual coalition of civil rights organizations, criminal defense lawyers and conservative and libertarian groups have challenged" them, "saying they confiscate private property without constitutional protections and lock poor people into a cycle of fines, debts and jail."

Drexel University Condemns Professor's Tweet Calling For "White Genocide."

The AP (12/26) reports that George Ciccariello-Maher, an associate professor of politics at Drexel University "has been summoned to a meeting with school officials after he tweeted a Christmas Eve message that appeared to support 'white genocide.'" Ciccariello-Maher, who is white "told the Associated Press by email Monday that his Christmas Eve message to nearly 11,000 Twitter followers — "All I Want for Christmas is White Genocide" — was meant to be satirical." Drexel condemned the tweet and said in statement that it was "taking this situation very seriously." Drexel continued, "While the University recognizes the right of its faculty to freely express their

thoughts and opinions in public debate, Professor Ciccariello-Maher's comments are utterly reprehensible, deeply disturbing, and do not in any way reflect the values of the University."

Dozens Shot In Chicago Over Christmas Weekend.

The CBS Evening News (12/26, story 9, 0:25, Brennan) reported that there were at least 27 shootings in Chicago over the weekend, and "12 people were killed," including two brothers who "were shot and killed at a family party Christmas night." ABC World News Tonight (12/26, story 10, 0:20, Llamas), which put the number of people shot over the weekend at "at least 40," said that 750 people have been killed in Chicago this year, marking "the highest annual homicide tally in more than two decades." NBC Nightly News (12/26, story 2, 1:55, Alexander) also reported on the violence, saying Chicago's "epidemic has only gotten worse this year." Ron Mott said there were more murders in the city "than New York and Los Angeles combined." Mayor Rahm Emanuel "has pledged to hire nearly 1,000 new police officers" in the next two years, "targeting the 1,400 mostly documented gang members authorities say are responsible for much of the bloodshed."

Detroit Crime Falls After Wayne State University Police Collaborate With Local Agencies.

The Detroit News (12/26, Kozlowski) reports that crime in Midtown Detroit "has plummeted while development has exploded" since the Wayne State University Police Department made the "unusual move eight years ago to collaborate with the WSU Center for Urban Studies, Detroit Police Department and public safety officials from several Midtown institutions for combined crime prevention with data-driven policing."

Study: Black Suspects More Likely To Be Killed By Black Officers.

The Washington Times (12/26, Sherfinski) reports that a new study shows that while there has been "an intense national focus on high-profile police shootings involving white officers and black men," white officers "are not statistically more likely to shoot and kill a black suspect." The study, authored by John R. Lott Jr. and Carlisle E. Moody of the Crime Prevention Research Center, found that "among a sample of 2,699 fatal police killings between 2013 and 2015...the odds of a black suspect being killed by a black police officer were consistently greater than the odds of a black suspect getting killed by a white officer." Among "the sample of those killed by the police, 45 percent were white, 25 percent were black, and 16 percent were Hispanic."

NYTimes A1 Analysis: Seller-Financed Housing Contributing To Problem Of Lead Poisoning.

The New York Times (12/26, A1, Stevenson, Goldstein) reports on its front page that "seller-financed housing contracts have aggravated [the] persistent problem of lead poisoning among young children" in the US. The Times explains that "tens of thousands of homes have been scooped up by investment companies" that then provide high-interest financing or rent-to-own opportunities "largely to poor people." The Times adds that the investors "often put no money toward renovation, or for fixing lead paint problems." The Times highlights the story of a woman who moved into a Baltimore home and then found her children had "dangerous levels of lead in their blood," which Baltimore health officials blame on an investment company that the woman signed a rent-to-own lease with that included the home "as is."

Greenstein: Trump, GOP Congress Pose "Greatest Threat To Federal Safety Net In Decades."

In an op-ed for the Washington Post (12/26), Robert Greenstein, president of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, calls President-elect Trump and a Republican-controlled Congress "the

gravest threat to the federal safety net in decades,” citing the “risks to essential benefits for tens of millions of low- and moderate-income Americans,” including loss of coverage under the ACA, “threats to the fundamental structure of the Medicaid health-insurance program for the poor and further reduction of already squeezed funding for scores of other important programs serving the most vulnerable Americans.”

CEO: Draining The Swamp Can Be A Permanent Fix.

In an op-ed for the Wall Street Journal (12/26), George Ball, chairman and CEO of W. Atlee Burpee Company, discusses the mechanics of literally draining a swamp and relates it to President-elect Trump’s vow to “drain the swamp” in Washington, arguing that Trump needs a strategic plan and, if it is done correctly, the fix can be permanent.

Allen Sees Problem With Trump’s Admiration Of Patton.

In a piece for Politico Magazine (12/26), Arthur Allen, eHealth editor at Politico, wrote that given President-elect Trump’s professed admiration for Gen. George Patton, who “was a genuine war hero in the fight against the Nazis,” it is “worth considering the rest of Patton’s record.” Allen argues that Patton’s wartime success has “whitewashed the rest of his character” including his “views on race and America’s role in the world,” which “were retrograde even in the 1940s.” Allen adds that Patton’s accidental death “may have been a blessing to Patton’s historical image, since it kept him from becoming just another one of America’s fanatical McCarthyites.” Allen argues that “leading the United States is not a campaign, and what matters is how [Trump] governs. And on that front, Patton’s life offers not much of an example at all.”

Heymann: Rabbi’s Sentence Based On Perjured Testimony, Prosecutorial Misconduct.

In an op-ed for the Washington Post (12/26), Philip B. Heymann, a former deputy attorney general under President Bill Clinton and assistant attorney general under President Jimmy Carter, writes that Attorney General Lynch and Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates “have, for the past year, rebuffed efforts by me and many other former senior Justice Department officials” to discuss “the case of Sholom Rubashkin, a Brooklyn-born rabbi who was sentenced to 27 years for bank fraud.” Heymann argues that Rubashkin’s “sentence was based on perjured testimony and prosecutorial misconduct” and lays out his case, adding that he is “saddened by the unwillingness of the department’s senior leaders to even discuss the injustice that more than 100 of their predecessors and former judges find evident in the Rubashkin case.”

NYTimes: Death Penalty Headed For “Dustbin Of American History.”

Citing the Florida Supreme Court’s decision last week invalidating between 150 and 200 death sentences, a New York Times (12/26) editorial says that “piece by piece, the death penalty continues to fall apart.” The Times calls the Florida decision “the most recent sign, in a year full of them, that the morally abhorrent practice of capital punishment is sliding into the dustbin of American history.” However the “total abolition of capital punishment...will depend on the Supreme Court’s reading of the Eighth Amendment’s ban on cruel and unusual punishments.” The Times praises Justice Stephen Breyer, who this month questioned “whether the death penalty itself — plagued by arbitrariness, racism, decades-long delays and faulty execution-drug protocols — violates the Eighth Amendment” for “asking the right questions” and says a majority of his colleagues should “listen closely and bring the only just result: the permanent abolition of capital punishment in America.”

WPost Criticizes DC’s System For People Returning From Incarceration.

The Washington Post (12/26) argues in an editorial that the District of Columbia's system to help people returning from incarceration actually "sets them up for failure," according to "a new report detailing the grim realities of returning D.C. citizens that faults both local and federal officials." According to the report from the Council for Court Excellence, much of the problem is due to "overlapping federal and local jurisdictions," each of which "has its own its own standards and procedures." After offenders "are sent to federal facilities throughout the country, depriving them of contact with family and other needed supports," they are returned to DC and "given insufficient or inadequate support services."

US Trade News

WSJournal A1: Strengthening Dollar Threatens US Exporters.

The Wall Street Journal (12/26, Tangel, Zumbun) reports that while the dollar's strengthening is good for US consumers and companies that purchase components abroad, it will hurt American manufacturers that rely on overseas sales. Many of those US companies, according to the Journal, have begun to cut revenue forecasts and seek methods of cutting costs. The Journal says the stronger currency and Federal Reserve's decision to raise interest rates creates a new challenge to President-elect Trump's vow to increase factory employment.

Terrorism - Homeland

Government Report: Nine Northern Virginia Residents Arrested For Aiding ISIL Since 2014.

The Washington Times (12/26, Scarborough) reports authorities have arrested nine Northern Virginia residents for aiding ISIL since 2014, according to a government message to police. The Times says the report "shows that Muslims seeking to become mass killers live near the seat of American government." Eight of the nine, according to the Times, were in their teens and early 20s – including a police officer, Starbucks employee, Army soldiers, bankers, and a cabdriver.

Royce Blasts Obama Effort To Release Gitmo Detainees.

In an op-ed for the Wall Street Journal (12/26), House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ed Royce decries President Obama's push to release 19 more Gitmo detainees before leaving office, arguing that, based on past experience, it will mean that dangerous jihadists will be released to countries that are not prepared to handle them.

Terrorism - International

Tunisia Arrests Nephew Of Berlin Christmas Market Attacker.

The Wall Street Journal (12/24, Morajea, Troianovski) reports the Tunisian Interior Ministry on Saturday said authorities arrested three members of a terrorist cell, including the nephew of the man accused of driving a truck into the Berlin Christmas market. Authorities, according to the ministry, discovered the cell on Friday, which is the same day when suspected attacker Anis Amri was killed by Italian police. The Ministry added that the nephew said he was in communication with his uncle through the app Telegram.

Iraq/Syria

US Commander Says Iraqi Forces Will Resume Push Inside Mosul In Coming Days.

Lt. Col. Stuart James, commander of a combat arms battalion assisting Iraqi security forces on the southeastern front, told Reuters (12/26, Kalin) that Iraqi forces "will resume their push against

Islamic State inside Mosul in the coming days...in a new phase of the two-month-old operation that will see American troops deployed closer to the front line in the city." The renewed push "appears likely to give American troops their biggest combat role since they fulfilled President Barack Obama's pledge to withdraw from Iraq in 2011." James told Reuters, "Right now we're staging really for the next phase of the attack as we start the penetration into the interior of east Mosul. ... So right now, positioning forces and positioning men and equipment into the interior of east Mosul...it's going to happen in the next several days."

Turkey To Facilitate Contacts Between Assad, Opposition Groups.

Bloomberg News (12/26, Kozok, Bilgic, Meyer) reports that Turkey says it will "facilitate contacts between Syria's government and opposition groups in preparation for peace talks" organized with Russia and Iran aimed at reaching "a nationwide cease-fire as the first step to ending an almost six-year civil war." A spokesman for President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Monday, "We must find a way to stop this bloodiest war of the modern era. ... Our aim here is to make sure the cease-fire is reached and systematically enforced in all of Syria. Our ultimate aim is to reach a political transition process."

Russian Official Says Mass Graves, Booby Traps Discovered In Aleppo.

The AP (12/26) reports Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Maj. Gen. Igor Konashenkov said Monday that Russian troops "had found mass graves in Syria's Aleppo with bodies showing signs of torture and mutilation." According to Konashenko, "dozens of bodies," some bearing gunshot wounds, have been uncovered. In addition, Konashenkov accused rebels of "laying multiple booby traps and mines across town, endangering the civilian population."

AP Analysis: Assad's Capture Of Aleppo Highlights His Dependence On Outside Powers. The AP (12/26, Issa) reports in an analysis that Syrian President Bashar Assad's capture of Aleppo "has underscored his dependence on outside powers," as "Turkey, Iran, and Russia have tilted recent events in his favor." According to the AP, those nations and possibly the Trump Administration "are now best placed to determine Syria's endgame." Turkey, Iran, and Russia "met in Moscow last week for talks on Syria that pointedly included no Syrians, indicating they prefer to pursue a grand bargain among great powers rather than a domestic settlement between the government and the opposition." Improving relations between Russia and Turkey "may prove to be a game changer." The AP says their "joint efforts on Syria...reflect a desire to establish spheres of influence."

Saudi Arabia Launches Fundraising Effort To Aid Displaced Syrians.

Reuters (12/26, Abdelatti) reports that Saudi Arabia has undertaken a fundraising campaign to aid Syrians "displaced by a five-year civil war, including those evacuated from eastern Aleppo, state news agency SPA reported on Monday." According to SPA, King Salman bin Abdulaziz "had ordered a relief campaign to be started on Tuesday and had allocated 100 million riyals (\$27 million) to the drive."

Cohen: American Influence Has Disappeared Under Obama.

In his Washington Post (12/26) column, Richard Cohen writes that President Obama "never quite appreciated the lessons" of the 20th Century and "has been all too happy to preside over the loss of American influence." Cohen argues that "American leadership has been essential to maintain world peace" since the end of World War II and "that leadership is gone. So, increasingly, will be peace."

AfPak

WPost Analysis: After Decades Of “Cruelty,” Dostum “May Have Gone Too Far.”

The Washington Post (12/23, Constable) reports that while Afghan Vice President Abdurrashid Dostum “has long been infamous for his cruelty” and “none of the accusations ever landed him in serious trouble,” he “may have gone too far” as former provincial governor Ahmad Ishchi has accused him of imprisoning him, beating him, and ordering him raped in November. The Post says “Afghans nationwide – including members of Dostum’s once-quiescent Uzbek minority – are reacting with outrage” and Dostum “has become a national embarrassment.” Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, according to the Post, is facing pressure from Western donors to prosecute Dostum and suspend him from office.

Other International News

As Russia Tests Nuclear Capabilities, Questions Continue Over Trump’s Nuclear Stance.

Amid concerns over what President-elect Trump meant when he tweeted last week that the US “must greatly strengthen and expand its nuclear capability until such time as the world comes to its senses regarding nukes,” Barbara Starr reported on CNN’s Situation Room (12/26) that Trump has “doubled down,” with MSNBC’s Mika Brzezinski shown stating that Trump told her on the phone, “let it be an arms race, because we will outmatch them at every pass and outlast them all.” Starr said a Trump Administration move to expand the nuclear arsenal “would be a stunning and unprecedented reversal of both democratic and Republican foreign policy, largely set by Ronald Reagan.” Meanwhile, a US intelligence assessment shows “that Russia is testing a new nuclear capable ground-launched missile, a potential violation” of a treaty signed by Reagan and Russia in 1988.

Sen. Chris Coons told CNN’s Situation Room (12/26) that Trump will “have to demonstrate his ability to stand up to Putin,” adding that Trump’s tweet on nuclear expansion “may be” a way of showing “that he’s willing to do so.” However, Coons also said, “I don’t know why Donald Trump would pick this fight when there’s no immediate or pressing need for us to address it.” Coons added that Trump’s use of Twitter to discuss foreign relations is a “very troubling trend,” but he is “hopeful” that once Trump becomes president “he’ll put the phone down and stop causing these international incidents with unguided tweets.”

Russia: Terrorism Not Suspected In Military Plane Crash. The CBS Evening News (12/26, story 6, 0:20, Brennan) reported Russia observed a national day of mourning on Monday for the victims of Sunday’s plane crash in Sochi that killed all 92 people on board. The Kremlin said Monday Russian officials “do not suspect terrorism.” ABC World News Tonight (12/26, story 8, 0:30, Llamas) similarly reported the Kremlin says “it doesn’t believe terrorism took down” the military plane flying en route to Syria. The New York Times (12/26, Nechepurenko) reports Russian Transportation Minister Maxim Sokolov “said that terrorism had not been ruled out, but that it was unlikely to be the cause of the crash.” The Washington Post (12/26, Roth) reports Russia’s Federal Security Service likewise said there has been no evidence “indicating the possibility of a terrorist attack or an act of sabotage on board” the Tu-154 jet.

NBC Nightly News (12/26, story 7, 1:00, Alexander) said the Russian investigation is now looking into technical faults and pilot error. However, Tom Costello said that terrorists “have hit Russia before, bringing down a passenger plane over Egypt in 2015,” adding that the “clues to this crash may be in the plane’s black boxes, now 200 feet under water.” The AP (12/26, Isachenkov, Silchenko) reports a massive search operation is now underway, including “about 3,500 people, 43 ships and 182 divers.” Several “parts of the plane’s fuselage” have been recovered, but the search

for the flight recorders “will likely prove challenging as they lack underwater locator beacons...common in more modern planes.”

Trump To Meet President Of Republic Of Congo.

The Hill (12/26, Uchill) reported President of the Republic of Congo Denis Sassou-Nguesso will meet with President-elect Trump on Tuesday, a spokesman for Sassou-Nguesso tweeted Monday. According to “a French-language statement included with the tweet,” Kabila and Trump will discuss “Libya and other issues related to Africa.” The Hill noted Sassou-Nguesso chairs the African Union’s High-Level Committee on Libya.

WPost A1: Trump Hotels Seeks To Enter Chinese Market.

The Washington Post (12/26, A1, Denyer, O’Connell) reports on its front page that while President-elect Trump calls China “an ‘enemy’ of the United States, a threat and an international pariah whose modus operandi is to lie, cheat and steal — but for at least eight years his hotel chain has been trying to do business here.” Although negotiations “have yet to bear fruit,” Trump Hotels has made “confident predictions this year about opening 20 or 30 luxury hotels in China,” which would involve “direct negotiations” with the ruling Communist Party. The Post says that while Trump tweeted earlier this month that he would do “no new deals” during his time in the White House, “it is not clear what that means for Trump Hotels as a company.” Both the Trump Organization and the Trump transition team “declined to comment.”

China’s First Aircraft Carrier Enters Disputed South China Sea.

The AP (12/26) reports China’s first aircraft carrier and “five other warships passed by Taiwan and sailed into the contested South China Sea on Monday, Taiwan’s Defense Ministry said.” China’s Defense Ministry said Saturday that the carrier “had set off for a routine open-sea exercise in the Western Pacific as part of its annual training,” but the AP says its entering into the South China Sea could raise tensions with Taipei. A senior Taiwanese military official told Reuters (12/26) the carrier had not sailed close to Itu Abu, Taiwan’s only holding in the disputed Spratly Islands.

WSJournal A1: Xi Raises Fears He’s Seeking More Autocratic Rule. The Wall Street Journal (12/26, A1, Page, Wei) reports on its front page that after Chinese President Hu Jintao’s power-sharing approach to leadership led to a rash of corruption, the Communist Party sought a firmer hand under current leader Xi Jinping. But four years later, Xi is raising concerns that could be shifting to more autocratic rule. The Journal notes that Xi has taken charge of the economy, the armed forces and other levers of the government.

China Restores Ties With São Tomé. The AP (12/26) reports China officially resumed diplomatic relations with São Tomé and Príncipe on Monday after the African nation “abruptly severed ties with Taiwan last week.” In what the AP calls “a victory for Beijing,” Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and his counterpart from São Tomé, Urbino Botelho, “appeared together on Monday at a ceremony in Beijing.”

Obama, Abe To Visit Pearl Harbor Today.

USA Today (12/26, Jackson) reports that “remembrance and reconciliation are the themes” as Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe travels to Pearl Harbor later today, “the first formal visit by a Japanese leader to the site.” Both Abe and President Obama will speak at the commemoration of the 1941 Japanese air attack and the two will also meet privately. Upon arriving in Hawaii on Monday, the AP (12/26) reports Abe laid wreaths “at various cemeteries and memorials,” including the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific. Reuters (12/26, Stephenson) reports Abe “made no public remarks and stood in silence before a wreath of flowers.” Reuters notes Abe “does not plan

to apologize for the 1941 attack but to console the souls of those who died in the war, his aides said" earlier this month.

The Washington Post (12/26, Nakamura, Lyte) says Abe's "historic visit to Pearl Harbor" on Tuesday "punctuates the Obama administration's multiyear effort to prod Japan and its neighbors in Asia to decrease tensions by moving beyond lingering wartime grievances." But the "geopolitical backdrop for the event has been clouded" by President-elect Trump's "pugnacious and unpredictable foreign-policy pronouncements." For example, the Post notes that during the campaign, Trump "questioned the value of the US military's basing agreements in Japan" and suggested it "consider developing its own nuclear weapons."

The New York Times (12/26, Rich) reports that while Japan announced Abe's visit earlier this month, it indicated "he would be the first sitting Japanese prime minister to visit Pearl Harbor," but "it turns out, though, that he might not be the first." Japanese leader Shigeru Yoshida "stopped in Hawaii in 1951 on his way home from signing a treaty in San Francisco and had paid a quiet visit to Pearl Harbor," and last week, "a Japanese-language newspaper in Hawaii reported that it had found in its archives articles about two other visits there by sitting Japanese prime ministers in the 1950s, including Nobusuke Kishi, Mr. Abe's grandfather." Author Michael Auslin writes in the Wall Street Journal (12/26) that while Abe may not be the first Japanese leader to visit, the visit is still symbolic as he will be the first to pay his respects in public.

US Top Global Weapons Producer In 2015.

The New York Times (12/26, Shanker) reports the US "again ranked first in global weapons sales last year, signing deals for about \$40 billion, or half of all agreements in the worldwide arms bazaar, and far ahead of France, the No. 2 weapons dealer with \$15 billion in sales," according to a new congressional study. The US and France also "increased their overseas weapons sales in 2015, as purchases of American weapons grew by around \$4 billion and France's deals increased by well over \$9 billion." Meanwhile, developing nations "continued to be the largest buyers of arms in 2015, with Qatar signing deals for more than \$17 billion in weapons last year, followed by Egypt, which agreed to buy almost \$12 billion in arms, and Saudi Arabia, with over \$8 billion in weapons purchases."

NYTimes A1: Saudi Royals Continue Spending Despite Austerity.

The New York Times (12/27, A1, Kulish, Mazzetti) reports on its front page that "as the Saudi government canceled a quarter of a trillion dollars' worth of projects...as part of a fiscal austerity program," questions have raised about whether the royal family "can simultaneously maintain its lavish lifestyle and its unchallenged grip on the country." According to the Times, "these are anxious times for the royals," led by 80-year-old King Salman "who has already had at least one stroke" and has "upended the traditions of succession" during his two-year reign. Some in the royal family have resisted a proposal by the king's son, Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, to partly privatize Saudi Aramco, which has "long been the lifeblood of government spending."

WPost Investigation: Three UN Peacekeepers In CAR Had Troubled Pasts.

A Washington Post (12/26, A1, Sieff) investigation found that three UN peacekeepers, "sent from Burundi to help protect victims of a brutal war in the Central African Republic," had a "past the United Nations was unaware of," including allegations of torture and other human rights violations. In each case, UN officials "determined that the allegations against the soldiers and their units were credible enough to send them home," but the Post says they "point to a deeper problem: even as

the United Nations' peacekeeping responsibilities grow, it has proven incapable of excluding potential human rights violators from its ranks."

Venezuelan Opposition: No More Talks Without Concessions.

Reuters (12/26, Cambero, Cawthorne) reports Venezuela's opposition on Monday "ruled out returning to Vatican-led talks with President Nicolas Maduro's government unless it makes major concessions." The opposition walked out of the talks earlier this month, "saying government officials were reneging on accords to allow humanitarian aid, reform the national election board, free jailed activists and restore the National Assembly's powers." On Monday, the group said, "If these demands...have not been satisfied by Jan. 13, obviously there will be no conditions to re-establish dialogue," referring to the next potential date for talks proposed by mediators.

A Washington Post (12/26) editorial, meanwhile, warns that the country "has become an unwilling test site for how much economic and social stress a modern nation can tolerate before it descends into pure anarchy." Venezuela, it continues, "is undergoing a comprehensive breakdown of order unlike anything Latin America has seen in decades," and "that its hemispheric neighbors witness this implosion without using the means they have to bring meaningful pressure to bear on the government renders the failure all the more profound."

Morales Seeks To Defy Constitution, Seek Fourth Term.

The Washington Times (12/26, Arostegui) reports that at "a time when leftist populism was supposed to be receding in Latin America, Bolivian President Evo Morales is trying to buck the trend by announcing his intention to seek an unprecedented fourth presidential term." His moves comes "even though 52 percent of Bolivians voted against extending presidential term limits in a national referendum in February," and international reaction "has been muted." Florida Republican Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart said, "The Obama administration has relegated human rights and democracy as an afterthought in Latin America."

WSJournal A1 Analysis: 1MDB Suspects Laundered Funds Through US Law Firms.

A front-page Wall Street Journal (12/26, A1, Ensign, Ng) analysis says suspects in the scandal involving the Malaysian state investment fund known as 1MDB may have laundered hundreds of millions of dollars through their US law firms' bank accounts. The Journal notes that law firms commonly pool together client funds they are holding for short periods without having to disclose who the cash belongs to, while banks and other firms are required to alert suspicious activity to federal regulators. The result is "a way of getting money into the US system without going through the anti-money-laundering safeguards," said Elise Bean, former chief counsel to a Senate subcommittee.

Queen Elizabeth Continues To Battle "Heavy Cold."

NBC Nightly News (12/26, story 12, 2:00, Alexander) reported Queen Elizabeth "is still under the weather," after she missed Christmas church service with her family "for the first time in three decades." NBC's Lucy Kafanov reported "the Palace says she's home fighting a heavy cold," and royal analyst Camilla Tominey said there "was a sense that they didn't want the Queen's illness to develop into anything more serious, a chest infection or even pneumonia."

WPost: Global Warming Killing The Great Barrier Reef.

A Washington Post (12/26) editorial decries what it calls a "real-time environmental catastrophe" as the Great Barrier Reef "has seen the largest coral die-off ever recorded" this year. The Post notes that scientists say the cause "appears to have been water temperature, which was up to two

degrees warmer than the normal summer peak." If humans "are to preserve crucial biodiversity...they have no choice but to curb the underlying problems," including greenhouse-gas emissions.

Last Laughs

Late Night Political Humor.

All late night talk shows were in re-run.

Editorial Wrap-Up

New York Times.

"The Continuing Collapse Of The Death Penalty." Citing the Florida Supreme Court's decision last week invalidating between 150 and 200 death sentences, a New York Times (12/26) editorial says that "piece by piece, the death penalty continues to fall apart." The Times calls the Florida decision "the most recent sign, in a year full of them, that the morally abhorrent practice of capital punishment is sliding into the dustbin of American history." However the "total abolition of capital punishment...will depend on the Supreme Court's reading of the Eighth Amendment's ban on cruel and unusual punishments." The Times praises Justice Stephen Breyer, who this month questioned "whether the death penalty itself — plagued by arbitrariness, racism, decades-long delays and faulty execution-drug protocols — violates the Eighth Amendment" for "asking the right questions" and says a majority of his colleagues should "listen closely and bring the only just result: the permanent abolition of capital punishment in America."

"How A Budget Chief Can Wreak Havoc." A New York Times (12/27) editorial says the traits Mick Mulvaney, the Republican congressman and "fiscal hawk" nominated by President-elect Trump to head the White House Office of Management and Budget, "brings to the job include a pronounced hostility to both federal spending and federal regulation — the basics of functional government." The Times warns that Mulvaney "could sign off on reckless budgets by pushing for rosy economic assumptions that can make it seem as if revenues will rise and deep deficits will disappear." But "it is impossible to know how Mr. Mulvaney will get Mr. Trump's numbers to add up."

Washington Post.

"Venezuela Is Lurching Closer And Closer To Chaos." A Washington Post (12/26) editorial warns that Venezuela "has become an unwilling test site for how much economic and social stress a modern nation can tolerate before it descends into pure anarchy." Venezuela, it continues, "is undergoing a comprehensive breakdown of order unlike anything Latin America has seen in decades," and "that its hemispheric neighbors witness this implosion without using the means they have to bring meaningful pressure to bear on the government renders the failure all the more profound."

"The Great Barrier Reef Is Dying And Global Warming Set The Scene." A Washington Post (12/26) editorial decries what it calls the "real-time environmental catastrophe" as the Great Barrier Reef "has seen the largest coral die-off ever recorded" this year. The Post notes that scientists say the cause "appears to have been water temperature, which was up to two degrees warmer than the normal summer peak." If humans "are to preserve crucial biodiversity...they have no choice but to curb the underlying problems," including greenhouse-gas emissions.

"It's Time To Rethink Reentry For The District's Incarcerated." The Washington Post (12/26) argues in an editorial that the District of Columbia's system to help people returning from

incarceration actually “sets them up for failure,” according to “a new report detailing the grim realities of returning DC citizens that faults both local and federal officials.” According to the report from the Council for Court Excellence, much of the problem is due to “overlapping federal and local jurisdictions,” each of which “has its own its own standards and procedures.” After offenders “are sent to federal facilities throughout the country, depriving them of contact with family and other needed supports,” they are returned to DC and “given insufficient or inadequate support services.”

Wall Street Journal.

“Barack’s Last Bank Bash.” A Wall Street Journal (12/26) editorial blasts the Justice Department for pursuing foreign banks for allegedly defrauding investors in their mortgage-backed securities in the years before the financial crisis. The Journal says the government is unlikely to prove any of the cases in court and praises Barclays for refusing to settle.

“The Burial Of Ebola” A Wall Street Journal (12/26) editorial praises last week’s announcement that researchers have developed a 100 percent effective Ebola vaccine. The Journal argues that while promising vaccines had been under investigation for years, regulatory delays erected by the public health bureaucracy delayed their progress.

“Jeff Sessions And Civil Forfeiture.” In an editorial, the Wall Street Journal (12/26) argues that while much of Democrats’ criticism of Attorney General-designate Jeff Sessions is wrong, his view on the government’s use of civil forfeiture warrant exploration. The Journal decries the practice, which Sessions has defended in the past, and says it would like to hear his views on it today.

The Big Picture

Headlines From Today’s Front Pages.

Wall Street Journal:

Dollar’s Rise Threatens Manufacturing Recovery

Some Trump Picks Face Stiff And Costly Confirmation Fights

Xi’s Power Play Foreshadows Historic Transformation Of How China Is Ruled

Law Firms’ Accounts Pose Money-Laundering Risk

New York Times:

Defying UN, Israel Prepares To Build More Settlements

Advertising’s Moral Struggle: Is Online Reach Worth The Hurt?

Seller-financed Deals Are Putting Poor People In Lead-tainted Homes

Trump’s Health Secretary Pick Leaves Nation’s Doctors Divided

Washington Post:

Peacekeepers With Disquieting Pasts Keeping Peace Or Causing Trouble?

For Trump, A Clash Of Deals, Policy In China

Obama Feels “Confident” He Could Have Defeated Trump

Indiana’s Voucher System Offers Hint Of School Policy In The Era Of Trump

Muslims In A Tennessee Town Hold Their Breath

Washington Times:

Obama Circumvents Constitution With “Signing Statements” After Blasting Bush

Islamic State Arrests Reveal Jihadi Threat Near Seat Of US Government

Evo Morales Seeks To Defy Bolivia’s Constitution, Latin America’s Rightward Shift

Republican Attorneys General Eager To Dismantle Obama Climate Agenda Under Trump
Donald Trump May Deal Death Blow To "Corporate Welfare" Ex-Im Bank

Story Lineup From Last Night's Network News:

ABC: Severe Weather; Weather Forecast; George Michael Dead; Obama Podcast On Trump; Trump Criticizing UN; Trump Foundation-Shutdown; Trump White House Team Appointment; Russia Military Plane Crash; Michigan Sink Hole; Chicago Violence Over Holiday; Inmates On Run; Holiday Sales; Porch Pirates; Carrie Fisher Condition; Stranded Family Rescued; NFL News; Christmas-Child Adaption.

CBS: Severe Weather-Holiday Travel; Severe Weather-Storm; Holiday Sales; Trump Transition-Conflicts Of Interest; Obama Podcast On Trump; Russian Plane Crash; Colombia-Plane Crash Investigation; Philippines-Typhoon; Chicago Violence; US Court Fees; Drunk Driving Deaths.

NBC: Severe Weather; Chicago Violence Over Holiday; US-Israel Relations; Trump Criticizing UN; Obama Podcast On Trump; Obama Vacation; Russia Military Plane Crash; George Michael Dead; Carrie Fisher Condition; Post-Christmas Shopping; NFL News; Queen Elizabeth With Cold; Holiday Donations.

Network TV At A Glance:

Severe Weather-Holiday Travel – 9 minutes, 10 seconds

Holiday Sales – 6 minutes, 10 seconds

Chicago Violence – 2 minutes, 40 seconds

Obama Podcast-Trump – 1 minute, 50 seconds

Russian Plane Crash – 1 minute, 50 seconds

Story Lineup From This Morning's Radio News Broadcasts:

ABC: Obama Podcast On Trump; Abe Pearl Harbor Visit; Severe Weather; Queen Elizabeth With Cold; China Space Plans.

CBS: Severe Weather; Post-holiday Shopping; Chicago Violence Over Holiday; Inmate On Run; Obama Podcast On Trump; Wall Street.

NPR: Chicago Violence Over Holiday; Severe Weather; Former Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich Asks For Pardon; Vera Rubin Death; Obama Wishes Happy Kwanzaa; Post-Holiday Shopping; Sony Entertainment Twitter Hacked; Weekend Box Office.

Washington's Schedule

Today's Events In Washington.

White House:

PRESIDENT OBAMA — Meets Japanese PM Abe in Hawaii to visit Pearl Harbor.

VICE PRESIDENT BIDEN — No public events scheduled.

US Senate: On recess until 3 Jan.

US House: On recess until 3 Jan.

Other: No relevant events scheduled.

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